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UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode #73

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11:30 to 12:30 P.M. C.D.S.T.

JULY 27, 1933

THURSDAY

ORCHESTRA:

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers." ----

ORCHESTRA: QUARTET:

ANNOUNCER: In your travels through the mountain regions of our country, have you ever noticed a little shining white house or tower perched on the summit of a rocky peak? These are the "eyes" of the National Forests - the fire lookouts placed there to permit a wide view of the surrounding country and to assist in guarding the forests against their arch-enemy, fire. In these observatories are Forest Service men whose duty it is to maintain a constant watch for the little tell-tale columns of smoke that so often herald the start of a great forest conflagration. Let's think of these lonely watchers when we go into the forests for work or pleasure, and make doubly sure that no careless act with fire on our part shall menace the valuable timber and water resources which they protect.

Each week at this time we bring you a glimpse of the Pine Cone National Forest District where Ranger Jim Robbins and his young assistant, Jerry Quick, are stationed. Let's see now what's going on at the Pine Cone Ranger Station ----

(SOUND OF STROPPING OLD FASHIONED RAZOR, SPLASHING WATER, JIM HUMMING)

JERRY: (OFF - CALLS) Hi, Jim, the horses are ready.

JIM: (CALLS) All right.

JERRY: (OFF - CALLS) Aren't you coming?

JIM: (CALLS) Just in a few minutes - hold your horses.

(RESUMES STROPPING AND HUMMING)

JERRY: (COMING UP) Oh, here you are - hiding out on the back porch, eh? - (LAUGHS) HEY - what you shaving for?

JIM: Well, young fellow, what do you usually shave for? To get the whiskers off your face, isn't it?

JERRY: Yeah, but -

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Of course, if you've only got a light chicken fuzz on your chin, it doesn't make so much difference, but ---

JERRY: Say, - never mind the kidding. -- What I mean is, what's the big idea of shaving today, when we're going up to Bald Peak lookout station?

JIM: Same reason as for shaving any other day. (CHUCKLING) Because we old timers are used to close shaves.

JERRY: (LAUGHING) Say now - you're sure full of it, this morning.

JIM: Besides, I like to look as nice as Nature'll let me.

JERRY: Yeah - so would I.

JIM: Well, you always do look neat and clean, son. I'll give you credit for that.

JERRY: Thanks - But up on top of Bald Peak, Jim. What difference does it make? Nobody'll see us.

JIM: You're wrong there, son. Pete Evans, the lookoutman- he'll see us, and I can't very well insist on his having a clean face if I'm not that way myself.

JERRY: Yeah, that's true enough.

JIM: Then we might run into someone on the trail. -- You know, with all the rough work we Rangers have to do, we don't want to look any worse than we have to, or folks'll be getting the idea we're a pretty tough bunch.

JERRY: Yeah, that's right.

JIM: This shaving business is kind of an early morning ceremony with us old time Rangers, Jerry. -- If you think I'm a stickler for shaving, you should have seen one of my old-time bosses, by the name of Smith Riley. I was out with him on a trip once, up in the high timberline country where we didn't see a sould for a week, -- but every sun-up he'd do his little shaving act just the same.

JERRY: That's going some.

JIM: Yep. -- With cold water right out of the snow banks sometimes. -- He'd find a nice quiet little pool and use it for a mirror.

BESS: (COMING UP) My lands, Jim Robbins! Why don't you do your shaving in the bathroom instead of messing up my back porch?

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Hello there, Bess. -- Did you hear that, Jerry? You'd think she owned this ranger station instead of the government.

BESS: Well, it's my home anyway, and it keeps me busy trying to keep you two men from messing it up.

JIM: Now, Bess --

BESS: Just look at all the soap and water you've slopped on my nice clean porch floor.--Isn't that just like a man!

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Maybe so - and here's something just like a woman.

BESS: What do you mean, Jim?

JIM: See here. You've been using my toothpaste again.

BESS: Why, I --

JIM: Now don't try to deny it. This is a serious offense. - Just look at this tube of tooth paste, Jerry - squeezed in two in the middle.

JERRY: (LAUGHING) Yes sir. That's terrible.

JIM: Reminds me of one of those freak cucumbers you see at the county fair. -- Jerry, if you're contemplating matrimony, you should require a written gaurantee that the toothpaste will be squeezed from the bottom up, instead of right in the middle.

JERRY: (SUDDENLY SERIOUS) Yeah - well, I - I guess I'm not contimplating matrimony. -- I - I guess I'll go (GOING OFF) bring the horses up, Jim ---

BESS: Jim - did you notice how Jerry got so serious then, all of a sudden?

JIM: Yep.

BESS: I don't know what to make of it. Ever since Ruth Lander came up from the Supervisor's office he and Mary Halloway have hardly spoken to each other. I wish they could make up.

JIM: Maybe he's kinda interested in this gal from the Supervisor's office.

BESS: Yes, I know - but I think he still likes Mary - they're just both too stubborn to give in, that's all. -- Couldn't you say something to him, Jim?

JIM: Well - you know, a cowpuncher was telling me the other day about riding by one of the salt grounds last summer and seeing a cow standing under a pine tree. Next day he happened to ride the same way and saw the same cow standing in the same place so he went over and investigated, and found that the tree had a hollow butt from an old fire scar, and the cow had got her head in there and couldn't get it out. She was nearly dead, and he found 'er just in time.

BESS: Well -- ?

JIM: (CHUCKLING) So I think I'll take a lesson from that cow, and not stick my head into things I don't know anything about.

BESS: Jim!

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(SOUND OF TWO HORSES WALKING, THROUGH FOLLOWING)

JERRY: It's sure a great day for a trip to Bald Peak, Jim.

JIM: Yes, but it feels kind of hot and muggy.

JERRY: It'll be cool when we get up above timerline.

JIM: Yep. - Whoa, Dolly. --Shall we let the horses blow a while?

JERRY: All right. --Whoa, Spark.

(HORSES STOP)

JERRY: I don't believe I'd care much for this job of lookoutman.

JIM: Why not?

JERRY: Well, last year, when I was up at Bald Peak on that painting job, I got pretty lonesome.

JIM: Yep. It's a lonesome job, all right. --Some of the boys have radios nowadays though, and that helps a lot.

JERRY: I forgot about the radio.

JIM: Yep. Some of these lookout men know more about what's going on in the world than the folks that live down in town.

JERRY: But I'd think it'd interfere with his work.

JIM: Nope. These old-time lookouts have learned how to keep one eye on the forest and one ear on the radio.

JERRY: I guess that's right. Pete Evans, up on Bald Peak, sure is keepⁿ at spotting smoke, all right.

JIM: You bet. -- Did I ever tell you about the lookout that reported a fire an hour before it started?

JERRY: (LAUGHING) No, I never heard that one.

JIM: Well, it sounds kind of fishy, I'll admit, but it happened last year down on one of the National Forests in Southern California. One morning, long about nine o'clock, the Oak Mountain lookout reported a yellowish cloud that looked like smoke rising off Whitaker Peak. -- That didn't worry the ranger much, 'cause he knew that country was all burned over up there, and a fire couldn't travel any to speak of, but he told the lookout to keep his eye on it.

JERRY: Did it turn out to be a fire?

JIM: Don't rush me, now. You'll spoil the story. --Well, at ten o'clock, the lookout calls again and says there's a fire sure enough, and that this time it was throwing up a column of black smoke. So the ranger beat it for Whitaker Peak as fast as he could travel.

JERRY: I suppose when he got there he found some rancher burning a pile of brush.

JIM: You're wrong there, son. He found a fire, all right, - and in the middle of it a burned auto with two dead men in it.

JERRY: Gosh, - did the car start the fire?

JIM: Yes and no.

JERRY: What do you mean?

JIM: Well, it happened this way. - One of those big natural-gas pipes, that run from the oil fields up there, had blown up under high pressure. -

JERRY: That's what caused the yellow dust cloud the lookout saw first?

JIM: Yes, that's it. -- Then two gas company patrolmen drove up there, looking for the break, and drove their car without thinking right into the escaping gas. The engine ignited it and it blew up with a big roar, killing the men and starting the fire.

JERRY: Gosh, that was terrible.

JIM: Yes, it was a tragedy. -- But that's how the lookoutman came to report the fire an hour before it really started.

JERRY: I see. - Say, the trail's sure dusty along here, aint it?

JIM: Yes, it gets that way in the summer when there's lot's of travel over it.

JERRY: I hope it'll rain soon - things are getting awful dry.

JIM: Yep. The forest is like a tinder box right now. --You may be getting that rain sooner'n you expected though. See those thunderheads coming up back of the Peak?

JERRY: Say, that's right. There's a storm coming up all right. Gosh, I hope the lightning doesn't start a lot of forest fires.

JIM: It might. You can't never tell. Sometimes the rain drowns 'em out. -- But I'm not half so scared of lightning fires as I am of fires caused by our careless fellow humans.

JERRY: Yeah. They're usually the worst.

JIM: Specially the smokers. -- Well -- "This is the forest primeval," as our old friend Longfellow says.

JERRY: Getting sentimental?

JIM: Nope -- I was just thinking about the forest's prime evil --

JERRY: Yeah?

JIM: Yep, if Longfellow was living out here today I could sure tell him what was the "prime evil" of the forest.

JERRY: Sure -- cigarettes.

JIM: Yep -- cigarettes in the hands of careless smokers. -- They've got more concentrated essence of grief and destruction wrapped up in 'em than all the lightning bolts old Jove ever turned loose.

(DISTANT RUMBLE OF THUNDER)

JERRY: Hear that thunder off there, Jim? Hadn't we better be moving?

JIM: I reckon we had -- right pronto. --(CLUCKS TO HORSE)

JERRY: Giddap, Spark.

(SOUND OF HORSES TROTTING)

JERRY: It's beginning to sprinkle, Jim. I'm going to put on my oilskin slicker. -- Whoa, old girl.

(HORSES STOP)

(ROLL OF THUNDER -- NEARER)

JERRY: Boy, she's sure coming this way fast. -- Ready, Jim?

JIM: All set.

JERRY: Come on, Spark.

JIM: Let's go, Dolly. (CLUCKS)

(SOUND OF HORSES AT FAST TROT; WIND WHISTLES) -FOLLOWING TALK ABOVE NOISE OF STORM)

JERRY: Gee, look at those black clouds overhead!

JIM: Sure looks bad. -- Step up, Dolly. -- By George, here comes the rain in sheets.

(WHISH OF WIND AND RAIN - HEAVY CRACK OF THUNDER)

JERRY: Easy there, Spark - Steady, boy --

JIM: We'd better get out of this timber pronto. 'Taint any too safe with the lightning playing around like that.

JERRY: Timberline's just ahead.

JIM: Come on - step up, Dolly. Let's get into the open, quick.

(HORSES HOOFES RACING - RUMBLE OF THUNDER - RESUME TROT)

JERRY: Gosh, Jim, this aint any too pleasant.

JIM: It's the safest place, out here in the open -

JERRY: That last bolt hit pretty close. I'm tingling all over.

JIM: Keep your nerve, son - the worst of the storm oughta be over pretty soon.

JERRY: Where's the lookout cabin? I can't see it.

JIM: Right ahead on that peak of rocks.

JERRY: Oh - sure, there she is. - Gee, I bet Pete'll be glad to see us.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) I reckon we'll be glad to see Pete, too.

JERRY: I'll say we will. --Looks like someone's moving around in the lookout cabin.

JIM: That's Pete all right.

JERRY: But surely he wouldn't stay up there in such a storm as this.

JIM: You don't know Pete.

(TERRIFIC CRASH OF THUNDER, FOLLOWED BY SHORT SILENCE, EXCEPT FOR WIND AND RAIN)

JERRY: (WEAK VOICE - CALLS) Jim - !

JIM: (OFF) Are you all right, Jerry?

JERRY: I - I guess so. -- How're you?

JIM: (UP) I'm all right.

JERRY: Gosh - it almost knocked me off my horse. -- Spark went down on his knees.

JIM: Is he all right?

JERRY: He seems to be.

JIM: Hmm - that was too near for comfort.

JERRY: Yeah, I'll say. -- The lightning must've run down this telephone line by the trail.

JIM: Yep. That's what it did. See, the wire's burned in two.

JERRY: I wonder how Pete -- (EXCITED) Hey, look, Jim - look!

JIM: By George, the lightning struck the lookout!

(FADEOUT ON HEAVY STORM EFFECTS. - FADE INTO DISTANT RUMBLE OF THUNDER)

JIM: (CALLS) Hey, Pete - are you all right?

JERRY: The door's stuck - I can't get it open.

JIM: Break it in.

(THUMPS AND CRASH OF SPLINTERING WOOD)

JERRY: There we are - Gosh, what a mess this place is in!

JIM: Where's Pete?

JERRY: Here he is - under the table.

JIM: Pete - wake up, old boy - wake up.

JERRY: He's clear out.

JIM: Dump the broken glass off that cot in the corner, and help me carry him.

(CRASH OF BROKEN GLASS)

JERRY: All ready --

JIM: Easy now -- Lay 'im on his back. -- There -- now open up his shirt.

JERRY: He's coming to.

PETE: (GROANING) Oh -- oh -- my head --

JIM: There now, old man -- you'll be all right --

JERRY: He's gone again. -- I'll get a wet towel and wipe his face.

JIM: Yeah. Bring a cup of water too -- and see if you can get some down his throat. --

JERRY: Gosh, the hair's all burned off the back of his head.

JIM: Maybe we'd better look him over. -- Strip off his shirt. -- Easy -- that's it --

JERRY: Look, Jim -- there's a red line down his back.

JIM: The lightning sure left its mark on him, all right.

PETE: (MUMBLING) Hello, Jim -- when did -- you -- get -- in?

JIM: Don't worry about that now, Pete -- lay back and rest, now. -- (TO JERRY) See if there's any hot coffee in that pot on the stove, Jerry.

JERRY: Yeah -- I'll have some in a minute.

PETE: (WEAKLY) Say -- what hit me?

JIM: Huh? Just a little stray bolt of lightning -- that's all.

PETE: Oh yeah -- I remember now -- the storm -- I was sittin' there at the map table -- then everything went black all of a sudden.

JERRY: Yeah, look at the hole in the wall - there's where the lightning came in - on the telephone line.

PETE: Looked like a big ball of fire -

JERRY: (SLIGHTLY OFF) There's not a whole pane of glass left in any of the windows, Jim.

JIM: Nope. - You'd better go down and fix that break in the telephone line, Jerry. I'll have to order some lumber and glass.

JERRY: Okay - I'll hook up the emergency set and phone Mrs. Robbins that we won't be home tonight, huh?

JIM: Yep. (CHUCKLING) That might be a good idea.

PETE: Gosh, my head sure feels funny -

JIM: You'll be all right after a good night's rest, Pete. Jerry and I'll stay here and help fix up the place a little.

PETE: Thanks - that's mighty fine of you, Jim.

JIM: You had a close shave, all right, Pete. Some folks'd call it good luck - it isn't very often that a man gets hit by lightning - and lives to tell the tale.

(FADEOUT ON DISTANT ROLL OF THUNDER)

ANNOUNCER: Well, that was another little experience for our forest rangers.

The high peaks where Forest Service lookout stations are built are frequently the target of lightning. Every possible device to protect the lookout towers from lightning has been installed by the Forest Service, so that today, such an accident as just happened to Pete is of rather infrequent occurrence. Nevertheless, the job of keeping a watchful eye on the forests to discover any outbreak of fire is not without its dangers.

"Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" comes to you each week at this time, as a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company, with the cooperation of the United States Forest Service.

eh-1:30 PM
July 26, 1933.

RECEIVED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

1917

The first thing I saw when I stepped out of the car was a bright sun that was shining down on me. I felt a little nervous, but I knew I had to do this. I walked towards the building and saw a lot of people. Some were looking at me, and some were talking to each other. I felt a little shy, but I knew I had to be brave. I walked up to the door and saw a man in a uniform. He was looking at me and I knew he was the one I was supposed to see. I walked in and saw a lot of people. Some were sitting at desks, and some were standing. I felt a little nervous, but I knew I had to do this. I walked up to the desk and saw a man in a uniform. He was looking at me and I knew he was the one I was supposed to see. I walked in and saw a lot of people. Some were sitting at desks, and some were standing. I felt a little nervous, but I knew I had to do this. I walked up to the desk and saw a man in a uniform. He was looking at me and I knew he was the one I was supposed to see.

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